

AD-A235129

USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER

A-1

The views expressed in this paper are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Defense or any of its agencies. This document may not be released for open publication until it has been cleared by the appropriate military service or government agency.

CONVERGENCE OF UNITED STATES AND INDIAN STRATEGIC  
INTERESTS IN SOUTH ASIA

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

Brigadier Shamsher S. Mehta, AR

Lieutenant Colonel Douglas V. Johnson, II, FA  
Project Adviser

U.S. Army War College  
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013  
10 April 1991

DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT A: Approved for public  
release; distribution is unlimited.

91 4 24 038

UNCLASSIFIED

## SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
1a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED			1b. RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS N/A		
2a. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY N/A			3. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF REPORT Public Release Distribution is unlimited. <span style="float: right;">Approved for</span>		
2b. DECLASSIFICATION/DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE N/A					
4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)			5. MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)		
6a. NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION U.S. Army War College		6b. OFFICE SYMBOL (if applicable)	7a. NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION		
6c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013-5050			7b. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)		
8a. NAME OF FUNDING/SPONSORING ORGANIZATION		8b. OFFICE SYMBOL (if applicable)	9. PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER		
8c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)			10. SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS		
			PROGRAM ELEMENT NO.	PROJECT NO.	TASK NO.
11. TITLE (Include Security Classification) Convergence of United States and Indian Strategic Interests in South Asia					
12. PERSONAL AUTHOR(S) Brigadier Shamsher S. Mehta					
13a. TYPE OF REPORT Final		13b. TIME COVERED FROM _____ TO _____		14. DATE OF REPORT (Year, Month, Day) 10 April 1991	
15. PAGE COUNT 32					
16. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION					
17. COSATI CODES			18. SUBJECT TERMS (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number) India, Indian Ocean, South Asia		
FIELD	GROUP	SUB-GROUP			
19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)  India and the United States are confronted with the most difficult task of all: normal diplomacy in a world of competing and cooperative states. In this new international era, both have visions of what the world should become. These visions assume relevance, because now there is a unique opportunity to shape and adjust them. The United States is committed to making the planet safer for pluralism and diversity. India, for its part, is embarked on a unique adventure in which the greatest experiment of cultural synthesis has to be successfully completed. These are converging interests with wide ranging ramifications to the global community.					
20. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED <input type="checkbox"/> SAME AS RPT. <input type="checkbox"/> DTIC USERS			21. ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION UNCLASSIFIED		
22a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL LTC DOUG JOHNSON			22b. TELEPHONE (Include Area Code) 717-245-3010		22c. OFFICE SYMBOL SSI

91 4 24 038

# ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Shamsheer S. Mehta, ERIG, AR

TITLE: Convergence of United States and Indian Strategic  
Interests in South Asia

FORMAT: Individual Study Project

DATE: 10 April 1991      PAGES: 32      CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

India and the United States are confronted with the most difficult task of all: normal diplomacy in a world of competing and cooperative states. In this new international era, both have visions of what the world should become. These visions assume relevance, because now there is a unique opportunity to shape and adjust them. The United States is committed to making the planet safer for pluralism and diversity. India, for its part, is embarked on a unique adventure in which the greatest experiment of cultural synthesis has to be successfully completed. These are converging interests with wide ranging ramifications to the global community.

## CONVERGENCE OF UNITED STATES AND INDIAN STRATEGIC INTERESTS IN SOUTH ASIA

### INTRODUCTION

Few relationships in the postwar era have been freighted with as much myth and wishful thinking as that between the United States and India.<sup>1</sup> Four notable truths have marked the relationship. The first is that India has remained peripheral to the consciousness of most of the United States. The second is that India has neither actually been an ally nor an adversary of the United States. To get America's focused attention, a country needs to be either an "enemy" or a "trusted friend." The third is that America is by no means peripheral as far as India is concerned, and the fourth is that this lopsided perception is no longer acceptable to India.<sup>2</sup> Considering that both countries share a form of government that reflects the human desire to be free and to see that others are free, there is much that can be accomplished together, towards these ends.

The questions that need to be addressed regarding the future relationships between India and the United States, to which the paper provides focus are, "Do longer term U.S. and Indian geostrategic considerations in South Asia conflict or are they mutually supporting?" Will the United States and India approach an overlap of security objectives—in a friendly, cooperative atmosphere or in one marked by misunderstanding and apprehension? To what extent will each nation's long-term security goals spur or limit bilateral political and economic relations? Can the two democracies influence the security strategies and objectives of other countries in the region? Should they? If so, how?<sup>3</sup>

The post-Cold War situation represents an unprecedented opportunity for breaking the indifference factor and bringing India into prominent focus in

the United States. With its shared ideals and commitment to democratic values and institutions, India can become a major partner with the United States in the quest for peace, stability and economic growth on this planet. This need no longer be simply a forlorn hope or a pious platitude.<sup>4</sup>

### SOUTH ASIA OVERVIEW

#### Geography

South Asia consists of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka with India having common land or sea borders with all the states. South Asia is an area that of late, and in terms of general interest, most of the world has relegated to the bottom half of its priority lists. The region plays a relatively small role in international affairs, and South Asian internal conditions are of interest mainly to political scientists and development economists. Yet a quarter of the world's population lives there, and it is an area of immense potential in economic terms as well as military capability. There is little doubt that South Asia will, over time, become a much more important focus of American attention,<sup>5</sup> but exactly when that will happen—and in what form—remain much less clear.

Although South Asia has played an important role in global history, and today is being drawn into this shared history at an increasingly rapid rate, the region's sheer size and latent strength enable it to navigate with considerable immunity from the set and drift of global sea changes. India's future, especially, will be determined more by indigenous than by external factors. Pakistan and the smaller nations of South Asia are much more open to external influences—partially because they are smaller, but also because they look to the outside world for protection from the overwhelming presence of India.<sup>6</sup>

It is difficult to distinguish between South Asia and India. We talk and write of India and feel guilty about ignoring the other states of the subcontinent--but if we focus on them, we risk ignoring the central fact of South Asia.<sup>7</sup> India, vast in population and area has a cultural and ethnic affinity with the other states of the region.

#### Regional Interrelationships

In relation to the six smaller neighbor states of the subcontinent, India has a special problem which bears comparison with the United States in relation to the world. Just as the United States (barring Soviet military capability) is disproportionately more powerful than all countries in the world, India is not only larger but industrially and technologically dominant in South Asia. On different scales, both India and the United States face the expectation of generosity, understanding, and economic support by their "neighbors," but both are treated often unreasonably as a foil rather than as a friend by smaller and weaker nations. India's inability to overcome Pakistan's historic fears will be eased simultaneously, as it perceives success in the improvement of India's relations with Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka. Conversely, tension between India and any one country has tended to create apprehension in all the other states of South Asia.<sup>8</sup>

India has a vested interest in Pakistan's integrity and prosperity. At the same time, Pakistan must accept that the ultimate guarantor of an optimal future for independent Pakistan is a dynamic India, acting not as a regional hegemon but as a power that is central to the stability of South Asia.<sup>9</sup>

#### The Religious Factor

History records that superstition, obscurantism, ritualism, and fanaticism have often marred Indo-Aryan, Indo-Muslim, and Anglo-Indian cultures of the past for long periods. These evils are not the monopoly of any single race or

religion. In fact religion has always been overvalued by humans as a political force: Roman Catholicism was unable to unify Catholic France and Spain; Islam could not unify West Asia, two wings of Pakistan, or prevent Saddam Hussein from invading Kuwait. It is doubtful that the Protestant Christian and Catholic Irish Christians could be expected to share a common view on Ireland. We would do well to recognize that when Babar fought at Panipat, it was Muslim who fought Muslim; in 1971, it was Muslim who fought Muslim in East Pakistan. Religion is not a solid basis upon which to construct a confederation of nations.<sup>10</sup>

### The Challenge

A stable South Asia, which is the greatest open laboratory of the development and modernization process, could have a critical and unique role in narrowing the North-South chasm. Moreover, South Asia can now disengage from the East-West strategic game and this might actually be a relief and not a loss to both Washington and Moscow. The superpower strategies of deterrence are now essentially dependent on long-range missiles based in their homelands or at sea. A military presence or involvement outside the superpower frontiers will evoke more and more political irritation, or may even prove to be a liability. The superpowers may also discover that the economic logic of arms control is undeniable, although, in the short-term, verification technologies may prove expensive, and that stability in the regional subsystem may not jeopardize superpower interests or security. It takes skill to understand the role of nationalism in South Asia; the real challenge is economic: to be partners in the progress of a region involving one-fifth of the world's population. Similarly, if China envisages a revitalized role of leadership in the Third World, as is likely, it will prefer a parallel relationship with India and Pakistan which does not demand a partisan

involvement on India-Pakistan issues. It might well be that this could initiate a process by which the Third World--the new world of the 20th century--through its own variant of the Monroe Doctrine and the Canning Declaration could help rediscover its strength and so redress the balance of the affluent and powerful old world of Europe and America.<sup>11</sup>

#### INDIA - A DEMOCRACY ON THE MOVE

India, a vast vibrant democracy, stands for the quest for modernization as much as it does for the preservation of tradition. While striving to assimilate the benefits of modern science and technology, the country retains the values which give it a unique place among the nations of the world.

India's experiment and success with democracy, has acted as a catalyst in the trend towards democratization being witnessed in South Asia. Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh and even Mynamar have haltingly, and at times hesitatingly, attempted, and in some cases succeeded in steering away from authoritarian rule. While these changes have undoubtedly been aided by tacit U.S. support and an internal awakening, they have also in part been abetted by a noninterventionist neighbor whose democratic example, despite the heavy odds against it, has been considered worthy of emulation in the same way as we see the changes in East Europe having been influenced by the democratic West. In contrast, the same cannot be said of communist China's neighbors.

India's own interests lie squarely in encouraging and furthering the region's move towards democratization. The truth is that while the world has witnessed many regional conflicts during the Cold War, none has been fought between two established democracies. Herein lies the key to the role that the United States and India can play in "harnessing" the "winds of change" so that South Asia inextricably moves towards democratic rule.



India is poorly understood by most Americans. Many impressions rest on "exotic" imagery from popular films that creates a general sense of romanticism and poverty. Few Americans think seriously about India in terms of international power and security. India is the world's second largest country and its largest democracy. The Indian middle class alone is considerably larger than the entire population of Great Britain.<sup>12</sup>

The size of India's population is relatively familiar to Americans, but not many realize that India ranks among the ten greatest industrial powers in the world. Moreover, many Americans do not understand that India has the third largest pool of scientists and engineers in the world after the United States and the Soviet Union; or that India's nearly six percent annual rate of economic growth over the past decade has been approximately double that of the United States. Finally, few Americans realize that India exports grain and industrial products, and that a number of multinational corporations have their headquarters in India.<sup>13</sup>

India's geography and size alone make it a factor to consider in terms of international security. It has the fourth largest army in the world. Both its economic growth and its increasing technological strength enhance its potential power. Understanding Indian security policies is essential for understanding regional stability in South Asia and the Indian Ocean area today. And as long as it is able to combine stable democratic government and economic growth, India is likely to cast an even wider shadow of influence in the future.<sup>14</sup>

Providence has destined India to be the laboratory in which the greatest experiment of cultural synthesis is being undertaken. India's contribution to the modern world is the evolution of a distinct type of humanity combining and harmonizing in itself the virtues of the diverse types which history has

produced. In a sense, the United States' experience has been similar. Two centuries of struggle and experimentation have resulted in an ethos which makes the United States the cynosure of the free world. India, with far greater ethnic and lingual diversity is struggling to evolve a characteristic and blended pattern of existence so that all cultures in its fold can live in peace and harmony and contribute their strength in different spheres of national development. The Indian experiment is a test of the United States' vision of making the world a safer place for pluralism and diversity. This convergence of ideological interests between the United States and India has in its success the roots of a safer and better world. It is in their mutual interests that the experiment succeeds.

#### THE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

##### Backdrop

On gaining independence in 1947 India considered "power-politics" outdated. In Nehru's first statement outlining India's foreign policy he remarked:

We propose, as far as possible, to keep away from the power politics of groups, aligned against one another, which have led in the past to world wars and which may again lead to disasters on an even vaster scale. We believe that peace and freedom are indivisible and the denial of freedom anywhere must endanger freedom elsewhere and lead to conflict and war. We are particularly interested in the emancipation of colonial and dependent countries and peoples, and in the recognition in theory and practice of equal opportunity for all races. . . .<sup>15</sup>

Nehru also extended the hand of friendship and cooperation to all the nations of the world, particularly to the countries of the British Commonwealth, the United States of America, and the Soviet Union.

His remarks regarding countries of Asia, however, were much more warm and personal. He recalled that:

We are of Asia and the peoples of Asia are nearer and closer to us than others. India is so situated that she is the pivot of Western, Southern and South East Asia. In the past her culture flowed to all these countries and they came to her in many ways. Those contacts are being renewed and the future is bound to see a closer union between India and South East Asia on the one side, and Afghanistan, Iran and the Arab world on the other. To the furtherance of that close association of free countries we must devote ourselves. . .<sup>16</sup>

The starting point clearly lies in the immense complexity of India's internal and external geopolitical situations. Its western neighbor leads India directly into West Asia, while its eastern neighbors verge on Southeast Asia. Relations with China are not only of particular significance in themselves but India has a vital interest in the developments in Central Asia with of course its endless coastline leading to the whole range of issues of the Indian Ocean. India has as much at stake in the free flow of the oil on which the world so heavily depends, as other industrialized but more distant powers. Few Americans realize that from the Andamans and Nicobar India's extended economic zones join those of Thailand and Indonesia. All these are obvious facts, but the way in which India has often been considered marginal to the issues raised in all these differing regions is hopefully a thing of the past.<sup>17</sup> For India to have a vital interest in what happens within or between different countries especially in the region around her should not be viewed in cold war terms or as some delusions of grandeur on India's part: India can no more keep away from the threats to its security arising from the crisis in Sri Lanka than the United States can afford to be aloof from developments in Panama. There is no question of India being a regional policeman: it is just that its size and situation oblige it to function as a stabilizing force in the highly volatile region it inhabits. However, far

from being in conflict with American interests in the same region, this should prove to be a matter of common interest. Certainly until now the benefits to the international community of a stable India playing a stabilizing role in its region have not been high on anybody's agenda. Both the global conditions and the respective priorities of the United States and India have come in the way.<sup>18</sup>

### Security Framework

The concept of security has involved the preservation of values enshrined in the Indian Constitution; those of equality, fraternity, justice and liberty. These values have shaped the Indian civilization. Given the pluralistic society, socioeconomic inequities, and the regional disparities at the time India became independent, it is only through the adoption and pursuit of these values that internal discord could be kept within reasonable limits.

In contrast to India's liberal democratic system, most of the countries in her neighborhood have chosen the path of praetorianism, and authoritarianism of different kinds. Many countries have adopted unitary religious frameworks leading some to varying shades of fundamentalism. More often than not, states in her neighborhood have been ruled by elites with a narrow decisionmaking base and questionable legitimacy in the eyes of their own people. This, in turn, has led to problems of regime legitimacy where ruling elites have opted for confrontational relationships to sustain themselves in power. The people of India have found it difficult to understand why other countries with core values similar to hers have preferred to support those with contradictory value systems at times, with detrimental and deleterious effect on India's security environment. A very large number of examples could be cited; but the essential point is that what India stands for, and the core values it has been trying to preserve and sustain are minority values in Asia if not in the

contemporary world in general. This in itself generates threats to India's security at a very fundamental level and even provides the potential for linkage between the external and internal factors affecting national security. The dissonance due to conflict of core values has been a marked phenomenon in the environment impinging on India since independence.<sup>19</sup>

### Security Environment

China continues to occupy 38,000 sq km of Indian territory and lays claim to another 90,000 sq km, besides the 10,000 sq km of Indian territory illegally ceded to it by Pakistan.<sup>20</sup> In spite of Indian efforts to find a reasonable solution to the territorial problem there has been little willingness displayed by China towards the resolution of the issue. The United States sees China from a different perspective; as an industrialized great power looking at a developing country; but the Indian perceptions of China are from the South, of the developing world looking at the third largest nuclear and missile power. This is much the same way as the United States continues to view the U.S.S.R.'s nuclear arsenal as a threat; although economically the U.S.S.R. may not even qualify as a Third World country. The Sino-U.S. and Sino-Soviet power equations are fundamentally different from the Sino-Indian equation. At the same time, China's need for an improving relationship with the United States of America and the U.S.S.R. is greater than their need for a relationship with India (or its other southern neighbors like Vietnam and South Korea). There is also little evidence of China having given up its traditional faith in recourse to force, and the philosophy of "teaching lessons" as demonstrated in the South China Sea and extension of support to the Khmer Rouge. Given the problems facing its leadership, great uncertainties exist concerning Chinese policies in the future. It has to be remembered that rapid shifts in Chinese policies have taken place in the past;

and at this stage the phenomenon cannot be ruled out for the future.<sup>21</sup> Even during the period when China had adopted the strategic defense doctrine of "People's War" as its national strategy, all the armed conflicts it had engaged in took place across its borders or beyond them. Its arms export policy also displays a certain disregard for restraint and responsibility as evidenced by the sale of the 3,500 km range CSS-2 IRSMs to Saudi Arabia in 1988, and sale of weapons systems including missiles to both Iran and Iraq during their long war which only helped to sustain the war.<sup>22</sup> Unlike the United States and the Soviet Union, China has never been the victim of disappointed expectations. On the contrary, for nearly ten years China has cleansed and improved its political image by deliberately avoiding political controversy and by burying political aspirations in commercial activity.<sup>23</sup> This must remain a matter of concern to India.

The People's Liberation Army (PLA) has also transformed its multitask modernization program into a "swords-into-billions" enterprise. China's plunge into the global arms trade stands out as the contradictory and hidden side of China's peace posturing. Indeed, for the first time, post-Mao China has become a Machiavellian arms merchant that tellingly and unabashedly embraces the attendant entrepreneurial opportunities as standard practice in contemporary international relations. Chinese arms-sales patterns and directions follow the logic of market demand factors.<sup>24</sup> In spite of routine and almost habitual denials and protestations, China (as well as Brazil, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, France, the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Soviet Union) sold arms from 1980 to 1986 to both belligerents in the Iran-Iraq War. Thus, economic power in post-Mao China grows out of cash sales on the arms barrelhead. On this matter, Dengist unprincipled pragmatism is

rampant--it doesn't matter whether the cat is black or white, or whether the PLA is red or white, as long as it catches greenbacks.<sup>25</sup>

In the past China has been more acted upon than acting on its own initiative. That changed with establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC). In Mao's words, "New China has stood up." Successful intervention in the Korean War and victory in the Sino-Indian border conflict proved his point. More recently political stability and spectacular economic growth have provided the foundation for China to exert an increasing influence in Asia and the world beyond.

How that influence will be exercised remains in question. Marxist-Leninist-Mao Zedong Thought ceased to be a successful ideological instrument for uniting and mobilizing the populace in the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution. An assertive nationalism under the rubric of patriotism (aiguozhuyi) prevailed briefly in the mid-1980s. The former projected a revolutionary foreign policy, albeit more in words than in action. The latter recalled China's past grandeur and past suffering with disturbing implications for its immediate neighbors.<sup>26</sup>

Moving to a consideration of Pakistan, that country has not only been ruled by the military, directly and indirectly, for most of its existence, but military power has been the prominent element in its foreign policy. Pakistan maintains a military capability well beyond what it can afford because of a perceived threat from India. This ignores the realities that since 1947 it was always Pakistan that initiated military action; that at no stage has India meant to threaten Pakistan. The war in 1971 resulted from West Pakistani elites refusing to accept the verdict of the first general election and then letting loose tyranny in East Pakistan with the result of violence (and ten million refugees) spilling over into India. Even then, the conflict in the

West was initiated by Pakistan by its surprise air attacks on 3 December 1971. Another fundamental problem with Pakistan has been its willingness to rescind international agreements into which it freely entered. The growth of Pakistani military power, therefore, has to be seen from India in the context of the potential risk of aggression, as indeed happened in 1947 and 1965.

Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, the Iran-Iraq War, and the emergence of the second Cold War between the superpowers rapidly led to a "strategic consensus" among the United States, Pakistan, and China, essentially in relation to the Soviet Union, but with inevitable fall-out on the security environment in the region. Pakistan sought and obtained a \$3.5 billion military and security-related economic aid package in 1981 and sophisticated weapons systems started to flow to Pakistan. The United States' arms supplies to Pakistan from the mid-1950s (though not meant to be used against India) have led to significant military build-up. Absence of U.S. reaction to the use of these weapons against India in April 1965, had finally provided to Pakistan the capabilities and confidence to launch "Operation Gibraltar" for the conquest of Jammu and Kashmir in August 1965. In the early 1980s, the force ratios were far less favorable to India than those in 1965. In political terms also, Pakistan adopted an increasingly aggressive posture (Zia's "peace offensive" notwithstanding), progressively distancing itself from and finally declaring the Simla Agreement of 1973 between India and Pakistan to be irrelevant. The new heavy doses of military aid and supply of high quality weapons systems, in Indian perceptions could provide incentives for military adventurism by Pakistan again.<sup>27</sup>

Even on matters of nuclear proliferation, Pakistan seems to have played the Afghanistan card quite well. She perceived that the major powers actually have two agendas: One is the highly laudable one of preventing the spread of



nuclear technology. The second is less laudable and recognizes that political realities dictate the manner in which the first policy is implemented. In Pakistan's case, the need to support the Mujahadeen in Afghanistan became for the United States a more important policy requirement than the accurate monitoring of Pakistan's nuclear program, though the nuclear issue has been once again resurrected since the cooling down of the Afghan crisis.<sup>28</sup>

If India and the United States could arrive at a set of convergent interests in the Asian region and realize the immense opportunities for cooperation in the economic, political and security spheres, the Pakistan factor could eventually diminish. It is not in the interest of either India or the United States to make their bilateral relationship a hostage to the Pakistani factor. Yet, it is in India's interest to see a stable and democratic Pakistan.

#### The Gulf War

In the case of the Kuwait crisis, India and the United States seem to have been able to reach accommodation with positions which differed in nuance and not in substance.

In terms of impact, the Gulf situation hit India and the other countries of the region in a far-sharper fashion than the United States. The United States loss is an "over the horizon" loss as it were, the Indian one is here and now. A World Bank study in the end of September 1990 noted that the loss of revenue to India from worker remittances and loss of trade and tourism with Iraq and Kuwait will amount to \$250 million in the rest of 1990, \$500 million in 1991 and a like sum in the following year.<sup>29</sup>

The Gulf crisis emanated from a differential resource endowment which is a reality with which the world system has to live. The world would have to recognize that disruptions in the production and supply of oil are

consequences of the basic political instability in the Gulf and the larger West Asian region. In the Middle East political turmoil is rooted in accumulated grievances, inherited border disputes, absence of democracy, militarization, control of the massive oil wealth by a few microstates (tribes with flags or just oil wells with flags) to cite a few factors. The Cold War did little to resolve the political roots of insecurity in the region. The real lesson is that the emergence of Iraq as a major force, prepared to take on the entire international system, has been the result of the balance of power politics pursued by the great powers in the Cold War period.<sup>30</sup>

#### Regional Military Balance

It is against this background that the historical experiences of India and the regional military balance need to be seen. India is now in the 18th year of peace—the longest unbroken such period in its history as an independent country. It has not been an easy peace. Clashes have occurred between 1983-1987 in the Siachen Glaciers area, and the Indian defense forces have been engaged in enforcement of internal law and order on a number of occasions and peacekeeping operations in Sri Lanka. India was able to provide timely support to the Maldives in November 1988 when it was invaded by a mercenary force.

This brings to focus the wide publicity received by the recent expansion of India's naval force. Peninsular India has a coastline extending over 4,700 miles. There are 588 big and small islands in the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal. The Andaman and Nicobar group of islands are 600 miles from the mainland and stretch over 550 miles from north to south. India's exclusive economic zone comprises nearly three quarter million square miles, and the country is significantly dependent on it: About 50 percent of India's oil needs and 80 percent of its gas requirements are met from offshore assets.

The Indian merchant marine consists of over 400 ships and operates from 10 major, 20 intermediate and 150 minor ports. Despite the projection of a "blue water" image at home and abroad, the Indian Navy is nowhere near attaining the capability to discharge its legitimate defensive role. The only effect of an exaggeration in Indian naval capability has been to instill a false sense of security at home and fears of regional hegemonistic intentions abroad, both of which are harmful to India in the long run. An effective maritime strategy is necessary for a degree of assurance of economic security derived from essentially defensive instincts.<sup>31</sup>

#### Nuclear Threat

India is surrounded by a nuclear weapons environment. This factor has to be given due consideration in strategic and security perspectives. It needs to be emphasized that nuclear weapons are essentially political rather than military weapons; and their usability really lies in the threat of use rather than actual use itself.

India has been advocating and supporting nuclear disarmament as the only viable solution to the threat posed by nuclear weapons. Besides the large number of initiatives taken by India earlier, a comprehensive action plan for disarmament was tabled at the UN Special Session on Disarmament in June 1988. However, little progress is taking place towards effective nuclear disarmament. China in particular has shown little inclination to even participate in disarmament processes. Meanwhile, Pakistan for all practical purposes, is now a nuclear weapons power. India's concerns and policy options, of course, cannot be related only to the status of Pakistan, but need to be cognizant of the totality of the nuclear environment and the nature of the threat it poses.<sup>32</sup>

It is towards this end that India needs to keep its nuclear option open. Meanwhile, it is necessary to maintain the technological capability to meet possible contingencies. India has shown remarkable restraint in not crossing the nuclear threshold in spite of technological capability quite apparent for over 15 years. India's objections to participation in Nuclear Weapons Free Zones, are based on a number of reasons. Any bilateral agreement with Pakistan which may superficially appear attractive, fails to address the essential security concerns of India. India has already signed confidence building measures; for example, nonattack on nuclear installations with Pakistan. In the ultimate analysis, durable security can be based only on measures which are cognizant of the overall security environment and the legitimate concerns of the countries involved.<sup>33</sup> A denuclearization of Asia and the contiguous oceans, pending eventual nuclear disarmament seems the only route for containing the proliferation problem.

#### SOUTH ASIA IN THE EMERGING GLOBAL AGENDA

A view of the emerging global agenda would help illuminate the role of South Asia in achieving peace, stability, and enhanced economic interdependence. There are six basic tasks on the agenda.

First, is the need to move from where we are to a hopefully peaceful resolution--a soft landing--of the Cold War. Much further progress will be required in arms control, the reorganization of Eastern Europe, in the many problems facing the Soviet Union and in settling definitively regional conflicts before the Cold War can be relegated to history.

Second, perhaps the key task in a post-Cold War world is to evolve a global consensus on the mechanism to resolve disputes of the type facing the world community in the Persian Gulf and in the way this consensus will shape

the New International Order. Perhaps this may be an opportunity to revitalize the U.N.

Third, the task is to absorb peacefully into the world economy the "Fourth Graduating Class." Britain was alone in the First Graduating Class into takeoff in the 1780s; the United States, France and Germany were in the Second Class from 1820 to 1860; Japan and Russia were the largest members of the Third Class in the last quarter of the 19th century; India, China, Brazil and Mexico are major figures in the Fourth Class, outstripped in the short run by the precocious performances of Taiwan and South Korea which are evidently destined to play major roles on the world scene. In the past technological process has led to conflict. Now a peaceful transition will depend, quite particularly, on the grace with which the global community absorbs these four major new technologically competent powers as well as a good many other middle range states in this class.

The fourth task--required for the fulfillment of the first two--is that the older, advanced industrial countries maintain their vitality and cohesion; notably the United States, Western Europe and Japan. A pulling apart between these countries could plunge the global community into a neomercantilist struggle for profit and power--or worse.

The fifth task is to patiently nurture, where and when possible, the societies which have had, for whatever reasons, great difficulties in modernization and have yet not entered economic takeoff.<sup>34</sup>

The sixth major task is for all to work together to bring under control and roll back an expanding array of inherently transnational threats to security. These are:

- o In the developing world where the nation state evolution is still under way, fundamentalist revivalism is likely to be the most severe destabilizing

factor in the years to come. In this respect the combination of evangelical fervor, petroleum riches, nonrecognition of a dividing line between religion and politics and nuclear proliferation together pose the most formidable challenge to international peace and stability.<sup>35</sup>

- o While the economically, industrially, socially and politically more advanced nations and population groups tend to favor the integration trend (as in Western Europe and North America) the undeveloped units are keen on their autonomy and separate sovereignty, thus giving rise to subnationalism.<sup>36</sup>

- o The shrinking of the globe by the communication and transportation revolutions has shown the wide gaps that exist between the rich and the poor. This, along with religious revivalism, intensified sectarianism, narcoterrorism, population movements, AIDS, and environmental terrorism tend to give nonmilitary threats primacy over the historical notion of military threats to security. This portends a far grater problem than the military threat in a bipolar world aggravated by the differing cultures and the number of nations involved.<sup>37</sup>

If something like these tasks constitute a reasonable approximation of the global agenda, it is clear that South Asia confronts each item. It has several relics of the Cold War to deal with in order to achieve peace and stability in the region: spillover of the Gulf crises to handle; potentially great and medium sized technologically mature powers to absorb; environmental challenges to confront; and countries at early stages of growth to nurture. Conflict and instability in South Asia could be detrimental to global peace and security.

## U.S. STRATEGIC INTERESTS: A PERCEPTION

### The United States and Asia

In the multipolar world, United States national security interests are more closely tied to world markets and economies than ever before. There is no better example of that than the Asia-Pacific-Indian Ocean region. An examination reveals that United States' interests are totally intertwined with the capital, markets, and resources of the region. A few examples to illustrate:

- o United States trade with Asia has exceeded trade with Europe for the past 18 years. Last Year its trans-Pacific trade exceeded that with Canada, Mexico, and South America combined.

- o The Asia-Pacific-Indian Ocean region accounted for about 39 percent of world trade last year, and 47 percent of the world's output.

- o The Asia-Pacific-Indian Ocean combined GNP exceeded Europe's for the first time in modern history this year and continues to grow about three percent faster.

- o United States exports to Japan are now approaching the level of exports to the United Kingdom, Germany, and France combined. The greater Asian region is the largest importer of United States agricultural products, accounting for 40 percent of all its agricultural exports.

- o United States trade with India has increased dramatically to the point where the United States is now India's largest trading partner. As India continues to develop technologically, the level of trade with the United States and the West will continue to rise rapidly.

- o The Asia-Pacific-Indian Ocean region is obviously important not only to the economic future of the United States, but also to her political well

being. The United States has invested a significant part of its national treasure in the region because to do so promotes her economic and political interests. However, free access to markets and resources, regional stability, economic prosperity, and expansion of democracy in the Asian region, benefit not only the United States, but other nations in the region as well. These interests coincide now more than ever before as the world enters a multipolar era, where global economic interdependence has become critical to every nation's well-being.

o In the Pacific-Indian Ocean region, the current United States approach toward building and maintaining strong bilateral relationships has been key in promoting stability. The focus of these bilateral relationships has been to identify areas of agreement and seek to build a strategy and define these relationships on the basis of shared interests. For example, the United States and India share convergent interests in the Middle East to keep the oil flowing and to maintain national security and integrity. Both countries also share mutual interests in the Indian Ocean region to maintain the freedom of the sealanes of communication and to promote regional stability. Regional stability is the key to a peaceful future and must be developed through consensus not unilateral edict.<sup>38</sup>

#### The United States and South Asia

In considering important future relationships in the United States regional security equation, India and South Asia must be taken into account. India is the world's largest democracy and is without question the dominant power in South Asia. First as the United States is faced with the challenges associated with the new world order, so is India presented the opportunity to examine alternate policies concerning the new world order.



Without the imperatives of the Soviet containment strategy that often served to hinder U.S.-Indian relations in the past, the United States is now free to pursue a pragmatic approach on the subcontinent. From a U.S. perspective, that approach has enjoyed a good level of success as most recently demonstrated by U.S. efforts to play a positive role in the crisis between Pakistan and India over Kashmir. A political settlement in Afghanistan that reshapes the United States' military involvement with Pakistan could further the United States pragmatic approach with India and lend credibility to the concept that relations with the United States need not be part of a "zero sum" game mentality which suggests that strong relations with one must come at the expense of the other.<sup>39</sup>

There are three key challenges or concerns facing the United States in South Asia:

- o The first and most important is the search for regional peace and stability;

- o Closely related to the first concern is the desire by the United States to reduce the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The crisis in the Gulf has made the United States acutely aware that these weapons present a real danger, not just an abstract one. United States-Soviet progress in nuclear arms control and the ground breaking agreement to destroy the vast majority of chemical weapon stockpiles are positive steps toward ridding the world of devastating weapons;<sup>40</sup> and

- o The third concern is maintaining and advancing democracy in the region.

While this is properly a challenge for the countries in the region themselves, U.S. policies derive from strong national values that relate to the growth of democratic institutions and ideals. In that regard, U.S. security relations will be influenced by several regional events:

First, Pakistan's recent elections arose in circumstances which strained the fragile democratic system in that country. Peaceful transfer between the roles of government and opposition is part of the democratic process. Everyone hopes that the roots of democracy will deepen in Pakistan.

Second, Sri Lanka continues to try to maintain its democratic tradition in the face of a challenge to its national integrity by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. The stress has taken its toll in the form of human rights violations on both sides.

Third, Nepal has embarked on a new road toward constitutional monarchy. The United States and India can be expected to watch the process closely and assist where appropriate.

Fourth, Bangladesh has recently embarked on a democratic adventure. The United States and India could assist in the institutionalization of the democratic process.

In articulating the challenges facing future U.S. policy formulation in South Asia one is struck by the near coincidence between U.S. and Indian security interests.<sup>41</sup>

#### CONVERGENCE OF INTERESTS: U.S. AND INDIA

Given that the United States and India have nearly parallel security objectives in the post-Cold War new world order, what opportunities exist for improved cooperation in pursuit of those objectives? These opportunities are outlined in succeeding paragraphs.

o Promoting Regional Security. Indian interest in keeping the region calm has been reflected in its willingness to commit forces in Sri Lanka and the Maldives. The Indians also share the United States' position on the human rights situation in Burma. One item on the agenda could be long-term stability in the Gulf. The Indian economy has been dependent on economic

stability in the world's oil markets. India shares long-term U.S. objectives in the Gulf of keeping the oil flowing from the region and maintaining open sealines of communication in the Indian Ocean. It is in U.S. and India's interest to see a stable Pakistan and a peaceful resolution of the India-China territorial dispute.

- o Combating Narcotics Traffic. The war in Afghanistan resulted in an expansion of the drug trade throughout the region. India is, unfortunately, paying a price for the expanded availability of drugs with the emergence of many thousands of addicts. India is becoming an important transit route. The cross border drug flow is one of the significant destabilizing factors in the troubled states of Punjab and Kashmir. This is a matter of concern to India. It is in U.S. and Indian interest to check the illicit traffic and to prevent the related problem of narcoterrorism.

- o Containing Islamic Extremism. Pakistani and Iranian support for Islamic fundamentalists in Kashmir has provoked strong concern over the spread of Muslim radicalism. The United States should find a willing partner in India in its efforts to dampen the spread of Islamic extremism in the region.

- o Preventing Further Nuclear, Chemical, Biological, and Missile Proliferation. A realistic regional approach on proliferation to keep the Asian region and contiguous oceans free of weapons of mass destruction, pending total nuclear disarmament, are avowed objectives towards which the United States and India could be willing partners.

- o New World Order. Looking ahead to the new world order in Asia, stability remains the strategic imperative, and the roles of India and the United States will reflect that imperative. India and the United States share democratic traditions, a comparable world vision, and nearly congruent

interests. Both nations derive value from the other's contribution to regional stability and economic and political well-being.

The world is undoubtedly at a major turning point in its history that brings with it high risks. Just when we think we are entering a kinder, gentler, more stable world--a Saddam Hussein jerks us back to reality. We would do well to remind ourselves of the world in the 1920s when nations based their future security on the triumph of democracy, economic interdependence, nonaggression pacts and arms control agreements. It all worked very well until protectionism, and resurgent nationalism coupled with the rise of dictatorships turned the world upside down. We must avoid such a failure again as we move toward the 21st century. The end of the Cold War has given us a unique opportunity to shape a brighter future and avoid the pitfalls of the past. Our challenge will be to make the right choices. The world's most prosperous democracy, the United States, and the world's largest democracy, India, could work together as partners for the good of the region, the world and humanity.

#### CONCLUSION

India's notions regarding its "zone of responsibility" as a regional power are not, on the whole, inconsistent with the interests of the World Community and the United States. India is well placed to stabilize and facilitate the economic development and democratization processes already set in motion in South Asia. The peculiar nature of the internal political, cultural and psychological foundations of India's foreign policy will ensure that India does not dominate the region, but fosters a homogeneity conducive to growth. India is "inscribed" with the humanistic and civilizational characteristics of the contemporary world and will help move the transformation of the underdeveloped countries in that direction.<sup>42</sup>

The United States has a vital role to play in the transformed world. The United States has to think globally, think pluralistically, think in terms of consensus, think of partners rather than dependents.<sup>43</sup>

Now that the United States and India have converging strategic interests-- a fruitful partnership cannot be far behind?

#### ENDNOTES

1. Stephen Cohen, "India and America: Towards a Realistic Relationship," Asian Affairs, Winter, 1988-1989.
2. Dr. Karan Singh, "Pay Attention to India," Washington Post, 19 September 1989.
3. Carl W. Ford, Jr., "Broad Aspects of U.S.-Indian Relationship," India-U.S. Symposium, 19-21 September 1989.
4. Ibid.
5. Thomas P. Thornton, Sea Changes: American Foreign Policy in a World Transformed, Council of Foreign Relations, New York, 1990, South Asia.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Jagat S. Mehta, The Security of South Asia, edited by Stephen P. Cohen, Urbana and Chicago; University of Illinois Press, 1987, India and Pakistan, We Know the Past, Must We Live In It.
9. Ibid.
10. Lieutenant General Eric A Vas (Ret), The Security of South Asia, edited by Stephen P. Cohen, Urbana and Chicago; University of Illinois Press, 1987, Changing Face of South Asia.
11. Mehta, Ibid.
12. Raju G.C. Thomas, Indian Security Policy, Princeton University Press, 1986, Forward by Joseph S. Nye, Jr.
13. Ibid.
14. Ibid.
15. Jawaharlal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru on World Affairs, 1961-66, Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi 1966, Speech Broadcast from New Delhi.
16. Ibid.
17. K.S. Bajai, "India's Security Perceptions," U.S.-India Symposium, Washington, 19-21 September 1989.
18. Ibid.

19. Air Commandore Jasjit Singh, "Strategic and Security Perspectives of India," Indo-U.S. Seminar, Washington, 19-21 September 1989.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. John Calabrese, "The Evolution of China's Role in West Asia, Asian Survey," Vol XXX, No. 9, September 1990, Conclusions.
24. Samuel S. Kim, China and the World: New Directions in Chinese Foreign Relations, Westview Press, 1989, China and the Third World.
25. Ibid.
26. Allen S. Whiting, China and the World: New Directions in Chinese Foreign Policy, Westview Press, 1989, Chinese Foreign Policy Options.
27. Singh, J., Ibid.
28. James Adams, Engines of War, The Atlantic Monthly Press, New York, 1990.
29. R. Chakrapani, "Bank, Notes India needs Emergency Aid," Hindu, 23 September 1990.
30. C. Raja Mohan, "The Future U.S. Security Role in the Asia-Pacific/Indian Ocean Region," India-U.S. Symposium, January 1991.
31. Lt. Sanjay and J. Singh, "The Indian Navy is No Threat," Proceedings, U.S. Naval Institute, 1991.
32. Singh, J., Ibid.
33. Singh, J., Ibid.
34. Rex G. Baker, Jr., Public Service Leadership Conference Report, 21 October 1989, Keynote Address: A Perspective of the Global Agenda. While the keynote address relates to the Pacific Basin, nearly all the points mentioned therein are equally applicable to South Asia.
35. Subrahmanyam, K., "Challenges to Regional Stability," The Second Annual Indo-U.S. Strategic Symposium, January 1991.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid.

38. Radm William Pendley, "The Future of U.S. Security Role in the Asia-Pacific-Indian Ocean Region," The Second Annual India-U.S. Strategic Symposium.

39. John H. Kelly, Assistant Secretary for North Eastern and South Asian Affairs, "Key Challenges Face South Asia," Dispatch, Vol. 1, No. 11, 12 November 1990, Bureau of Public Affairs, U.S. Department of State.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid.

42. D. Braun, The Indian Ocean: Region of Conflict or Zone of Peace, London: Croom Helm, 1983.

43. Peter G. Peterson, Sea Changes: American Foreign Policy in a World Transformed, Council of Foreign Relations, New York, 1990, Foreward.



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adams, James. Engines of War. New York: The Atlantic Monthly Press, 1990.
- Akbar, Ali. South Asia: Nuclear Stalemate or Conflagration. Karachi, Research on Armament and Poverty, 1987.
- Anand, V.K. Lieutenant Colonel. Terrorism and Security. New Delhi: Deep and Deep, 1984.
- Baker, Rey G., Jr. Keynote Address. "Public Service Leadership Conference Report." October 1989.
- Barry, Buzan, and Gowher Rizir, eds. South Asian Insecurity and the Great Powers. London: St. Martin, 1986.
- Bajpai, K. S. "India's Security Perceptions." U.S.-India Symposium. Washington: 19-21 September 1989.
- Bajpai, U.S., ed. Indian Security. New Delhi: Laneers Publishers, 1983.
- Braun, D. The Indian Ocean: Region of Conflict or Zone of Peace. London: Croom Helm, 1983.
- Chakrapani, R. "Bank Notes India needs Emergency Aid." The Hindu. 23 September 1990.
- Cohen, Stephen. "India and America: Toward a Realistic Relationship." Asian Affairs. Winter, 1988-1989.
- Cohen, Stephen P. "Security, Peace and Stability in South Asia: An American Perspective." ACDIS Publications. Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Summer 1987.
- Cohen, Stephen P. "America and South Asia: Looking Ahead." ACDIS Publications. Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, July 1987.
- Ford, Carl W., Jr. "Broad Aspects of U.S.-India Relationship." India-U.S. Symposium. 19-21 September 1989.
- Gupta, Shekhar. "Ethnic Conflict and State Security in South Asia: India's Punjab Crisis." ACDIS Publications. Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, January 1988.
- Hussain, Zakir, Dr. Muslims in India. Ministry of External Affairs Format. Bombay: Tatar Press.
- Indian Council of World Affairs. Jawaharlal Nehru on World Affairs, 1946-1964.
- Katyal, K. K. "Evacuation to be Over in Two Weeks." The Hindu. 20 September 1990.

- Kim, Samuel S. China and the World: New Directions in Chinese Foreign Policy. Westview Press, 1989.
- Mehta, Jagat S. The Security of South Asia. Edited by Stephen P. Cohen. University of Illinois Press, 1987.
- Pendley, William, RADM. "The Future of U.S. Security Role in the Asia-Pacific-Indian Ocean Region." Second Indian-U.S. Strategic Symposium. January 1991.
- Peterson, Peter G. Sea Changes, American Foreign Policy in a World Transformed. Council of Foreign Relations, 1990.
- Petrol Price Reduction after Gulf Stabilizes. Economic Times 27 November 1990.
- Plan Review Likely in Wake of Gulf Crisis. The Hindu. 17 August 1990.
- Raja, Mohan C. "The Future U.S. Security Role in the Asia-Pacific-Indian Ocean Region." India-U.S. Symposium. January 1991.
- Rizir, Hasan Askari. "The Military and Politics in Pakistan, 1947-1986." Lahore: Progressive Publishers, 1987.
- Ross, Andrew L. "Arms Acquisition and National Security in the Third World." ACDIS Publications. Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, September 1986.
- Singh, Jasjit. "Strategic and Security Perspectives of India." India-U.S. Symposium. Washington: 19-21 September 1989.
- Singh, Karan Dr., "Pay Attention to India." Washington Post. 19 September 1989.
- SIPRI Yearbook, 1987. World Armaments and Disarmaments. Oxford University Press.
- Subrahmanyam, R., and Singh, Jasjit. "Role of U.N. in Post-Cold War Era." India News. September 1990.
- Subrahmanyam, R. "Challenges to Regional Stability." Second Annual India-U.S. Strategic Symposium. January 1991.
- Thomas, Raju G. C. Indian Security Policy. Princeton University Press, 1986.
- Thornton, Thomas P. Sea Changes: American Foreign Policy in a World Transformed. Council of Foreign Relations. New York: 1990.

Vas, E. A. Lieutenant General. The Security of South Asia. Edited by Stephen P. Cohen. University of Illinois Press, 1987.

Whiting, Allen S. China and the World: New Directions in Chinese Foreign Policy. Westview Press, 1989.